

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A music distribution method comparing:

requesting a server to distribute music
information from a music reproduction apparatus through
5 a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in
which said music information requested and information
concerning settings and conditions required for
transmitting information from said music reproduction
10 apparatus to said server are integrated;

distributing by said server said distribution file
to said music reproduction apparatus through said
communication medium; and

receiving by said server through said
15 communication medium a number of times of reproduction
of said music information reproduced by said music
reproduction apparatus.

2. The music distribution method according to
claim 1, further comprising requesting by said server
20 to said music reproduction apparatus through said
communication medium payment of a music-listening fee
in accordance with said number of times of reproduction
of said music information.

3. The music distribution method according to
25 claim 1, wherein said communication medium is the
Internet.

4. The music distribution method according to

claim 3, wherein said information concerning said
settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address
required for reporting said number of times of
reproduction of said music information from said music
reproduction apparatus to said server.

5 5. The music reproduction method according to
claim 1, wherein said server receives said number of
times of reproduction of said music information at
a given frequency.

10 6. A music distribution method comprising:
requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to
a server distribution of music information through
a communication medium;

15 receiving by said music reproduction apparatus
from said server through said communication medium
a distribution file in which said music information
requested and information concerning settings and
conditions required for transmitting information from
said music reproduction apparatus to said server are
20 integrated;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus
said music information in said distribution file;

25 recording by said music reproduction apparatus
a number of times of reproduction of said music
information reproduced; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus
said number of times of reproduction of said music

information to said server through said communication medium.

7. The music distribution method according to claim 6, further comprising receiving by said music reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment request according to said number of times of reproduction of said music information, which is transmitted from said server through said communication medium.

8. The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

9. The music distribution method according to claim 8, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

10. The music distribution method according to claim 6, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information at a given frequency.

11. A music distribution method comprising:
requesting a server to distribute music information from a music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

generating by said server a distribution file in which said music information requested, advertisement

information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

5 distributing by said server said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

 receiving by said server through said communication medium a number of times of reproduction
10 of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.

12. The music distribution method according to claim 11, further comprising:

15 requesting by said server to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium payment of a music-listening fee in accordance with said number of times of reproduction of said music information; and

20 requesting by said server to an advertiser through said communication medium payment of an advertisement fee in accordance with a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information.

25 13. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

14. The music distribution method according to

claim 13, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for reporting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

15. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said server receives said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

16. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said information concerning settings and conditions and said advertisement information are recorded in said header information portion and said music information is recorded in said main body information portion.

17. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion arranged under said header information portion, and a structure in which said music information is recorded in said main body information portion and said information concerning settings and conditions and said

advertisement information are included in said music information.

18. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listener who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity according to said advertisement information should be carried out.

19. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said music information and said advertisement information do not have relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a predetermined time in favor.

20. The music distribution method according to claim 11, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to respective output modes in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with an output mode thereof.

21. A music distribution method comprising:

requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to
a server distribution of music information through
a communication medium;

5 receiving by said music reproduction apparatus
from said server through said communication medium
a distribution file in which said music information
requested, advertisement information and information
concerning settings and conditions required for
transmitting information from said music reproduction
10 apparatus to said server are integrated;

reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus
said advertisement information with reproduction of
said music information;

15 recording by said music reproduction apparatus
a number of times of reproduction of said music
information reproduced and a number of times of
reproduction of said advertisement information; and

transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus
to said server through said communication medium
20 said number of times of reproduction of said music
information and said number of times of reproduction
of said advertisement information.

22. The music distribution method according to
claim 21, further comprising receiving by said music
25 reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment
request according to said number of times of reproduc-
tion of said music information which is transmitted

from said server through said communication medium.

23. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

5 24. The music distribution method according claim 23, wherein said information concerning settings and conditions includes an Internet IP address required for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information from
10 said music reproduction apparatus to said server.

 25. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of
15 said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at a given frequency.

 26. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has
20 a transmission/reception device and a portable reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device
25 reproducing said music information and said advertisement information in said distribution file and transmitting said number of times of reproduction of

said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information received to said server.

27. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music reproduction apparatus has a transmission/reception device and a portable reproduction device, said transmission/reception device receiving said distribution file from said server and transmitting said distribution file to said portable reproduction device, said portable reproduction device keeping said distribution file therein for a given period of time and then transmitting it to said transmission/reception device, said transmission/reception device calculating estimated values for numbers of times of reproduction of said music information and said advertisement information based on a keeping period in said portable reproduction device when said distribution file is returned from said portable reproduction device and transmitting the obtained values to said server.

28. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header information portion and a main body information portion

arranged under said header information portion, and
a structure in which said information concerning
settings and conditions and said advertisement
information are recorded in said header information
5 portion and said music information is recorded in said
main body information portion.

29. The music distribution method according to
claim 28, wherein said music information recorded in
said main body information portion includes specific
10 information which can specify said advertisement
information, and said music reproduction apparatus is
allowed to reproduce said music information when said
advertisement information in said header information
portion coincides with said specific information
15 included in said music information in said main body
information portion.

30. The music distribution method according to
claim 21, wherein said distribution file has a header
information portion and a main body information portion
20 arranged under said header information portion, and has
a structure in which said music information is recorded
in said main body information portion and information
concerning settings and conditions and said
advertisement information are included in said music
25 information.

31. The music distribution method according to
claim 21, wherein said music information and said

advertisement information have relevancy, and said music information and said advertisement information are selected in such a manner that the population of listeners who prefer songs according to said music information matches with the population of audiences to which advertisement and general publicity should be carried out according to said advertisement information.

32. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said music information and said advertisement information have no relevancy, and said advertisement information is selected in such a manner that a given advertisement is reproduced with a predetermined timing and at a given time in favor.

33. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

34. The music distribution method according to claim 26, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said portable reproduction device can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio

output in accordance with its output mode.

35. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced during reproduction of said music
5 information.

36. The music distribution method according to claim 21, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music information.

10 37. A music distribution method comprising:

requesting by a music reproduction apparatus to a server distribution of music information through a communication medium;

15 receiving by said music reproduction apparatus said music information requested from said server through said communication medium;

receiving by said music reproduction apparatus information concerning settings and conditions and a plurality of sets of advertisement information from
20 said server through said communication medium;

selecting by said music reproduction apparatus any advertisement information to be reproduced from a plurality of sets of said advertisement information when reproducing said music information;

25 reproducing by said music reproduction apparatus said selected advertisement information with reproduction of said music information;

recording by said music reproduction apparatus
a number of times of reproduction of said music
information reproduced and a number of times of
reproduction of said advertisement information; and

5 transmitting by said music reproduction apparatus
said number of times of reproduction of said music
information and said number of times of reproduction of
said advertisement information to said server through
said communication medium.

10 38. The music distribution method according to
claim 37, further comprising receiving by said music
reproduction apparatus a music-listening fee payment
request according to said number of times of
reproduction of said music information, which is
15 transmitted from said server through said communication
medium.

39. The music distribution method according to
claim 37, wherein said communication medium is the
Internet.

20 40. The music distribution method according to
claim 39, wherein said information concerning settings
and conditions includes an Internet IP address required
when said music reproduction apparatus reports said
number of times of reproduction of said music
25 information and said number of times of reproduction of
said advertisement information to said server.

41. The music distribution method according to

claim 37, wherein said music reproduction apparatus transmits said number of times of reproduction of said music information and said number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information at
5 a given frequency.

42. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information has a plurality of sets of information corresponding to each output mode in such a manner that said music
10 reproduction apparatus can select at least any one of a banner advertisement, a character output and an audio output in accordance with its output mode.

43. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is
15 reproduced during reproduction of said music information.

44. The music distribution method according to claim 37, wherein said advertisement information is reproduced before or after reproduction of said music
20 information.

45. A music reproduction apparatus which reproduces music information distributed from a server, comprising:

means for requesting said server through
25 a communication medium to distribute said music information;

means for receiving from said server through said

communication medium a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for reproducing said music information in said distribution file;

means for recording a number of times of reproduction of said music information reproduced; and

means for transmitting said number of times of reproduction of said music information to said server through said communication medium.

46. A server which distributes music information to a music reproduction apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a request of distribution of said music information from said music reproduction apparatus through a communication medium;

means for generating a distribution file in which said music information requested to be distributed, advertisement information and information concerning settings and conditions required for transmitting information from said music reproduction apparatus to said server are integrated;

means for distributing said distribution file to said music reproduction apparatus through said communication medium; and

means for receiving through said communication

medium a number of times of reproduction of said music information and a number of times of reproduction of said advertisement information reproduced by said music reproduction apparatus.